

Message Text

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14

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SNM-02 RSR-01 RSC-01 /019 W

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P 270746Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6016

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 13316

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

AMBASSADOR HANDLEY AND ACTING ASST SECY AMBASSADOR HUMMEL
FROM AMBASSADOR UNGER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR

SUBJECT: OFF-SHORE WAIVER FOR NARCOTICS VEHICLES

REF: STATE 162330

1. WE HAVE HAD SEVERAL EXCHANGES WITH AID IN AN EFFORT TO OBTAIN
AN OFF-SHORE WAIVER FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF 17 VEHICLES TO
BE USED BY THE RTG IN ITS CAMPAIGN AGAINST NARCOTICS
TRAFFICKING. THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF MONEY INVOLVED IS LESS THAN
\$51,000. REFTEL TURNS OUR REQUEST DOWN FLATLY.

2. I WOULD MUCH APPRECIATE IT IF YOU WOULD LOOK INTO THIS
AND SEE IF WE CAN'T GET A FAVORABLE DECISION. THESE
VEHICLES ARE TO BE USED BY THE THAI NARCOTICS POLICE IN
COVERT SURVEILLANCE IN RURAL AREAS. AMERICAN VEHICLES
WOULD BE FAR TOO CONSPICUOUS AND QUICKLY IDENTIFIED BY
THE TRAFFICKERS. THIS WOULD LIMIT THEIR UTILITY FOR
SURVEILLANCE PURPOSES, TRANSPORT TO MEET INFORMANTS AND
CONDUCTING SURPRISE RAIDS. ADDED ARGUMENTS AGAINST
U.S. VEHICLES ARE THE FACT THAT SURVEILLANCE AND RAPID
MOVEMENT IN AND OUT OF TRAFFIC WOULD BE DIFFICULT
IN A LEFT-HAND DRIVE VEHICLE AND ALSO THAT SPARE
PARTS AND REPAIR WOULD BE UNAVAILABLE.

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3. AS REPORTED IN BANGKOK 13117, CONGRESSMAN WOLFF TOOK US TO

TASK FOR WHAT HE CONSIDERS AID'S "BUSINESS AS USUAL" ATTITUDE TOWARD NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT PROGRAMS AND ITS SLOWNESS TO PROVIDE NEEDED HELP TO THE RTG IN THIS FIELD. THESE VEHICLES ARE URGENTLY NEEDED, AND I AM CONVINCED THAT WE HAVE A JUSTIFIABLE CASE FOR A WAIVER. MOREOVER, THIS IS ONE OF THOSE SITUATIONS WHERE I BELIEVE EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE SHOULD BE MADE TO IMPROVE FURTHER THAILAND'S CAPABILITY TO MOVE AGAINST TRAFFICKERS. I WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE YOUR PERSONAL ATTENTION TO THIS PROBLEM.

4. IN THIS SAME CONNECTION, I HOPE OUR NEW USOM DIRECTOR, ROGER ERNST, WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY DURING HIS BRIEFING, WHICH SHOULD NOW BE UNDERWAY, TO MEET WITH BOTH OF YOU TO DISCUSS THE NEED FOR FLEXIBILITY AND RAPID ACTION IN PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO COMBAT THE NARCOTICS TRAFFIC AND ALSO TO PROMOTE CROP SUBSTITUTION. I BELIEVE IT MOST IMPORTANT THAT ROGER HAVE A FULL UNDERSTANDING OF THIS SITUATION AND OF THE PRESSURE YOU ARE UNDER PRIOR TO HIS ARRIVAL.
UNGER

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